

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the consideration shown by the Office as evidenced by the Office Action mailed on 27 August 2004. In that Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 and 3-18. In this Response, Applicants have amended claims 1, 17, and 18. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application by the Examiner in light of the above amendment and the following remarks offered in response to the Office Action.

The Examiner has presented several rejections of independent claims 1, 17, and 18 (and their dependent claims) under 35 U.S.C. §103(a). Each of the rejections to independent claims 1, 17, and 18 included the application of EP 490,882 A1 (hereinafter '882) in combination with other references, and the Examiner uses this particular '882 reference to purportedly show that the prior art teaches, suggests, or discloses using a pilot arc power supply to provide the coating, as recited in claims 1 and 17-18. Applicants maintain that the definition of "pilot arc power supply" provided in the specification (see, for example, paragraph 0012) clearly sets forth the notion that, unlike the applied prior art, the PTA apparatus contemplated by the present invention and recited in claims 1, 17, and 18 includes multiple power supplies, including a pilot arc power supply that is designed to provide low currents for use in non-transferred mode and a second power supply capable of providing high currents for use in transferred arc mode.

Applicants appreciate the detailed analysis of their arguments on the above points offered by the Examiner in the current Office Action. Although Applicants strongly believe that the disclosure in the specification is sufficiently specific to support their argument that the pilot arc power supply term is used to single out one power supply of an apparatus that includes a plurality of power supplies, Applicants have chosen to amend claims 1, 17, and 18 to recite that the PTA apparatus comprises a first power supply and a pilot arc power supply, thus clarifying the concept of a PTA apparatus having more than one power supply. Applicants point to paragraph 0012 of the specification for support for this recitation.

Applicants respectfully submit that, as argued previously, none of the references applied by the Examiner teach, suggest, or disclose that the non-transferred mode of torch operation, using a separate, low-current power supply, is a desirable means for applying a coating to a substrate, or even operating the torch in pilot arc mode using a separate power supply for transferred and non-transferred modes, respectively. Applicants respectfully submit that amended claim 1, its dependent claims 3-16, and independent claims 17-18 are patentably distinct from the applied prior art for this reason.

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In light of the remarks presented herein, Applicants believe that this serves as a complete response to the subject Office Action. If, however, any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Paul DiCotza", is written over a horizontal line.

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